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Group Conflict Readiness Assessment

The following assessment is intended for participants to understand whether they are ready to engage in the process and, if not, what supports, skills, or information are needed to prepare the group to be ready (if ever). Readiness in this case does not mean that a participant (you) will experience no discomfort, struggle, or difficulty during the process. Rather, that in the face of those struggles you feel confident, supported, and able to access what you need to see the process through.

How to complete the assessment:

For each prompt, circle the response that feels most true for you, with 4 being “ready” and 1 being “not ready.” For 3 – 1, use the reflection prompts to consider the *why*, *what*, and *how* of each. You may find after reflection that you are more or less ready than you initially thought—change answers and reflect again.

When finished, input your final answers into this online form:

<https://forms.gle/JV6u2nX6BwbNv5hZ9>

Please share any relevant or useful information with the facilitator upon completing the assessment.

Reflections:

Consider the specifics of the prompt; for example, if you answered 3 to prompt A, consider the self-care and collective care needed to address feelings/experiences of instability, set-backs, or lack of progress; if you answered 1 to prompt D, consider what specifically is holding you back from being transparent about your capacity or willingness during the process and what might make you ready to do that (if anything).

3—This will be difficult for me, but I can handle it.

- What self-care will you engage in if this becomes difficult?
- What care will you engage in with others if this becomes difficult?
- How will you communicate what you need, when you need it?

2—I need more information/skill/preparation/support before I can handle this.

- What specific information, skill, preparation, or support do you need/want?
- Who can provide/share those things?
- How will you communicate what you need?
- How will you know when you feel ready/prepared?

1—I can't handle this right now.

- Should the process go on without you, or wait until you're ready?

- If the process goes on, do you want to be informed about progress or kept out of it? Do you want to be able to provide feedback or information that is brought into the process?
- If you don't participate, are you willing/able to accept the outcome? Under what conditions?
- If the process should wait, how long/until when?
- What impact might waiting have on you and others? How can positive, meaningful impacts be made possible during this waiting period (such as learning, healing, preparation, boundaries, space, etc.)?

Scoring/Understanding Results:

All 3's and 4's suggest that you are ready to participate and should go forward with the process, assuming other factors (timing of sessions, etc.) line up with your ability.

Any 2's should be raised with the facilitator and/or the people who can address those concerns, before going forward.

Any 1's should be told to the facilitator and or participants. If they are a hard no, meaning that because of this 1 you don't feel you can engage in the process at all at this time, tell the facilitator and the other participants. If you are a key stakeholder in the process, this will be taken into consideration as to whether the process can go forward (e.g. should the process wait for you or stop altogether). If you or the group feel that they can continue without your participation, efforts will be made to include or inform you in whatever ways possible.

Sometimes one participant is at a 1 ("not ready") for personal reasons related to their own mental state or capacity, but they are okay with the rest of the group going forward. Other times, that participant's 1 is a signal of a larger problem—especially if they are central to the conflict or events, in which case the process cannot go forward without them—and that's really important for us to know early on. If there are numerous 1's in a group, that typically points to a bigger structural issue—the group is overextended, the facilitator isn't trusted or not a good fit, or there are dynamics in the relationships involved that make a group process untenable. In all of these cases, there may be ways to change the conditions in order to change 1's to 2's or 3's (such as finding a different facilitator or holding the process with different people involved). Other times, that means that group needs to pursue a different avenue altogether (such as organization restructuring or stopping a project). Whatever the case is, the assessment brings these concerns to light so that they can be discussed—if you are at a 1, saying so is the best thing you can do for the process.

A: A group conflict process doesn't follow a linear path: from chaos to more and more ordered, from confusion to more and more clarity, from hurt to more and more healed. Often, there are periods of revelation (truth-telling) that muddy the waters, expose suffering or struggle, or disrupt the outcome, causing us to go back and reconsider, reflect, and reorganize the process. This requires us to be vulnerable to potential upsets and setbacks, in service of resolution or transformation in the long run.

4—I understand and am ready for this.

3—This will be difficult for me, but I can handle it.

2—I need more information/skill/preparation/support before I can handle this.

1—I can't handle this right now.

Space for reflection:

B: A group conflict often takes a considerable amount of time (hours, weeks, or months depending on the circumstances). The process will require many dedicated hours at a time listening, sharing, and reflecting on the conflict and circumstances involved, much of that time will not be directly addressing the core problems, rather building a collective understanding about what happened. This requires us to be open to participating at times without trying to "fix" or "solve" the problem or "convince" others about our side, simply listening to understand and sharing to be understood.

4—I understand and am ready for this.

3—This will be difficult for me, but I can handle it.

2—I need more information/skill/preparation/support before I can handle this.

1—I can't handle this right now.

Space for reflection:

C: A group conflict process seeks to find a solution, resolution, transformation, or outcome that is collectively decided and mutually beneficial. Rather than trying to win others to "our side" or our preferred solution, we share our ideas with a willingness to be convinced that other ideas will work better, that our ideas can be improved upon, or that we will compromise on some things that we want in order for others to get what they need the most. This requires us to be flexible about the outcome, rather than rigidly aligned with one "perfect" solution/result.

4—I understand and am ready for this.

3—This will be difficult for me, but I can handle it.

2—I need more information/skill/preparation/support before I can handle this.

1—I can't handle this right now.

Space for reflection:

D: A group conflict process often produces work in order to bring the ultimate outcome into being. The process itself determines the agreement, next steps, or framework that will improve the conditions that generated the conflict. More work is often needed in order to produce or maintain those conditions, or else the conflict will flare up again. This requires us to come up with solutions, agreements, and understandings that we are willing to act on after the process is over (e.g. if I say I'm ready to move on and forgive, I should feel sure of that, rather than come back with blame a few weeks later; if we agree to set up a new program, we should consider capacity and timeline before agreeing to it) otherwise we are setting ourselves up to fail.

4—I understand and am ready for this.

3—This will be difficult for me, but I can handle it.

2—I need more information/skill/preparation/support before I can handle this.

1—I can't handle this right now.

Space for reflection:

E: The facilitator for this conflict does not have the relationships that we (participants) have with each other, our communities, and folks impacted by what's happening. As someone in those relationships and communities, a participant has a responsibility to communicate with the facilitator if there are essential people missing, even if those people will make participation more difficult or they will advocate for a dissenting/opposing position. People of dissenting or opposing positions bring essential information and experience to a conflict and if excluded, will likely be in a position to reactivate the conflict regardless of a collective decision made without them. This requires us to welcome and include people who are difficult, who make us uncomfortable, who we disagree with, and who make bring struggle to a conversation. The facilitator is responsible for getting us through those difficulties, and can only do so if made aware of these people, relationships, and dynamics.

4—I understand and am ready for this.

3—This will be difficult for me, but I can handle it.

2—I need more information/skill/preparation/support before I can handle this.

1—I can't handle this right now.

Space for reflection:

F: If the issues or concerns involved in this conflict are personal or have personal stakes (to our identities, harms we've experienced, our physical safety, our integrity, our relationships, etc.) conversations can be triggering, activating, or upsetting before they get better. To a certain extent, this requires us to know ourselves, what we can handle, how we can address activated states of being and gain support, and whether we are emotionally and mentally ready to engage in the process without being destabilized. For some, this may require inner-work, reflection, and healing before we are able to participate fully and hear others' perspectives and experiences.

4—I understand and am ready for this.

3—This will be difficult for me, but I can handle it.

2—I need more information/skill/preparation/support before I can handle this.

1—I can't handle this right now.

Space for reflection:

G: A group conflict process only works when participants communicate with the facilitator when they need help, support, or see an obstacle to success (as opposed to letting things fall apart or walking away). This requires participants to have reasonable trust and confidence that the facilitator will be responsive to questions and feedback, and that participants will reach out when necessary.

4—I understand and am ready for this.

3—This will be difficult for me, but I can handle it.

2—I need more information/skill/preparation/support before I can handle this.

1—I can't handle this right now.

Space for reflection:

Questions, comments, reflections to share/talk over with the facilitator: